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This booklet discusses some general ideas on and outlines a particular approach to the appraisal of "curriculum plans" (those documents dealing directly with the purposes and general organization of the school's program and with the purposes and methods of instruction and evaluation). A section on "Descriptive Analysis" presents a series of guidelines (questions indicating the kind of information to be obtained) for analyzing three basic categories of contents in curriculum documents: (1) decisions and recommendations, (2) justification for decisions, and (3) forms of presentation of decisions and recommendations. Separate guidelines are listed for the general (school, department) and specific (course, unit, daily activity) levels of planning. A section on the "Evaluative Approach" is a description of three sources of criteria for judging the quality of curriculum plans: (1) a view of curriculum planning as an organizational process; (2) a theory or point of view about learning and instruction; and (3) models or rationales which identify the types of curricular decisions, the relationships among these decisions, and the bases on which decisions should be made. Appended is an illustrative analysis of a sample document (included in the booklet), "A Study Guide for Teachers: Political Education for Fifth Grade--To be Included in the Study of U.S. History." (JS)

THE STUDY OF CURRICULUM PLANS

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for Project MACSI

SCHOOLS FOR THE 70's

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CONTENTS

The acronym *MACSI* is taken from the initials of the three institutions which joined together to create a Supplementary Center for Curriculum and Instruction – the Montgomery County, Maryland, Public Schools; the Anniston, Alabama, City Schools; and the National Education Association Center for the Study of Instruction.

The Project was funded by a grant from the U.S. Office of Education, Public Law 89-10, Title III, made to the Board of Education of the Anniston, Alabama, City Schools (USOE Project No. 67-03388-0). Staff work, the development of special materials, consultant expenses, and travel were funded by a subcontract from Anniston to the NEA-CSI and Montgomery County.

FOREWORD

Three institutions joined together to create Project MACSI. The goals were to help teachers become more skillful in the rational planning of curriculum and instruction, to study the processes of school improvement, and to help other schools across the country learn from our experience. Change—constructive change—was the overriding aim of the Project.

Each institution brought to the Project its unique competencies and interests. Montgomery County had several years of experience in the adaptation and field testing of a design for a comprehensive school program and took seriously the idea of making schools real centers of inquiry by opening their doors so that others could learn with them. Anniston was involved in long-range innovative activities with special emphasis on individualization of instruction. The need for a solid program of leadership development was of central importance to the staff in their schools. The NEA Center for the Study of Instruction (CSI) brought to the Project a history of solid work in curriculum study, several years of scholarly inquiry into the nature of instructional change, and a network of unusually competent persons willing and able to assist in the work to be done.

During the first year of Project MACSI, we focused on four substantive curricular tasks—selecting and validating objectives, designing relevant learning opportunities and instructional materials, finding new ways of organizing the curriculum, and developing more effective means of evaluation. A major action goal was to help the Anniston faculty broaden and deepen their understandings of these tasks as a new program was designed for the Anniston schools. Activities included seminars, work in the laboratory provided by Montgomery County, readings, small pilot projects, visits to exemplary schools, leadership meetings sponsored by other groups, and assessment of current curricular documents.

The purpose of this publication is to describe and analyze one very important curriculum task. *The Study of Curriculum Plans* is not a report of all of the work of Project MACSI. Rather, it is a description of one significant curriculum activity. Certain examples are used in the text, but these are not drawn from the Project itself.

CSI acknowledges the significant contributions of Dorothy Neubauer, Gary Griffin, and Ole Sand in preparing this volume. We are particularly grateful to Arlene Payne for moving this document from a gleam in her eye to publication! Hopefully, the reader can move some of her creative ideas to action.

Robert M. McClure
Associate Director, CSI
Formerly Director, Project MACSI

Concepts and Procedures

The need for more systematic approaches to curriculum assessment is evident, but the total task is so large and complex that it must be considered in its various parts. One concrete and manageable part of the total task is the principal topic of this paper—the analysis of written curriculum plans. There is much current emphasis in the literature on change and innovation and, correspondingly, on the development of new curriculum plans. Yet careful study of existing plans, assuming they have some virtues on which to build, is one way of deciding what changes are needed.

The procedures of curriculum development have remained fairly constant for the last several decades. Representative groups from the total faculty develop a portion of the course of study or a unit of work or identify appropriate learning opportunities or resources. Seldom are the products of these activities compared with clearly stated criteria. A study of curriculum plans affords one means by which a school system can determine exactly what it is trying to accomplish through its curriculum planning activities.

The development of ideas and procedures for various phases of curriculum assessment was a major effort of Project MACSI. The intent of this paper is to share some of these general ideas, as well as a particular approach to the appraisal of curriculum plans.

FORMAL AND INFORMAL PLANNING

Curriculum planning, like other organizational planning, is a complex interaction of formal and informal decision-making processes. Part of the planning is done by formal assignment, and the curriculum plans or documents thus produced usually require official approval at some organizational level. Other planning, at an informal level, is done by individuals or small groups and is not usually subject to formal approval. An understanding of the relationship between the formal and informal processes is critical to the understanding of how to bring about curriculum change.

Educational institutions vary widely in the extent to which plans for the curriculum are written and approved in the formal sense. In colleges and universities, formal planning is often limited to the identification of course titles and to brief descriptions of the courses —all other curriculum decisions are the responsibility of the individual instructor. In contrast are those schools, more common at the K-12 level, where formally approved curriculum plans include detailed descriptions of daily activities and a listing of the materials for instruction. This distinction reflects contrasting policies of decision making and differing attitudes toward the degree of direction and guidance needed by teachers in carrying out their work.

Not only is there variation in official policy concerning formal planning, but there is also variation in the way formal and informal processes relate to one another. One school system may pour extensive resources into the production of detailed, officially approved plans that simply collect dust, because the formal planning has little effect on the way teachers conduct their instructional program. Another school system may expend little effort on formal planning when, in reality, such guidance is greatly needed or desired. Practices are influenced by differing attitudes within the organization about the necessity and usefulness of formal curriculum planning.

We have been told by a number of educators that the study of curriculum plans is a waste of effort because teachers are not going to follow the plans anyway. If one accepts this view, it would seem that the process of planning as well as the process of appraisal is an exercise in futility. Curriculum planning can be ineffective, especially if it is carried to overdetailed prescription, but this should not automatically lead to rejection of curriculum planning as an organizational function. Every school system has some formal plans for its program, and to a degree these plans are followed, if only in their most general aspects. *The problem is to create a formal planning process which is an effective influence on instructional practices.*

To bring about a more harmonious relationship between the formal and informal aspects of curriculum planning and to meet the needs of the institution and of individual teachers, the following questions must eventually be answered:

- How much and what kind of formal planning is needed or desirable?
- How should formal planning vary according to differing circumstances and differing qualifications of the people involved?
- What should be the role of the individual teacher in determining the purposes and nature of instruction?

– What is the relation of the teacher's role to the formal planning process?

These questions are not easily answered. Their complete study requires a multiphase appraisal which includes study of (a) the formal plans and the formal planning processes, (b) the communication and implementation processes, (c) the informal planning processes, and (d) the effectiveness of the interaction between formal and informal planning as reflected in short-term and long-term influences on students and the community. Each phase of appraisal is itself a complex process of empirical study. The study of existing formal plans is one of the initial actions that may be taken in moving toward answers to the questions posed.

Analysis of curriculum documents reveals the planners' points of view and what they consider important; it identifies the nature of plans which have official endorsement; and it yields a picture of the organization's attitudes toward formal planning. This information is of limited value, however, until it is related to such other information as teachers' perceptions of their own needs; then it can be used effectively to determine a future course of action. The general approach described in this paper has been developed with such relationships in mind.

ABOUT THE TASK OF ANALYZING PLANS

Describing and evaluating existing curriculum documents is both an educative process for school personnel and a step toward improvement, but it is not a simple task. Detailed critical reading is required more than anything else. The man-hours entailed depend, of course, on the number and specificity of documents involved. The main focus in Project MACSI was on an across-the-board look at the formal plans for a total organization or school system, but the guidelines described here could be applied to any portion of the total program. The more inclusive procedure is proportionately more difficult, involving as it does more levels of planning and more curriculum areas, and it is likely to be complicated by variations in practices within the organization. An advantage of comprehensive study, however, is that it includes comparisons among different planning levels and major subject areas.

The term curriculum plans is used to refer to those documents dealing directly with the purposes and general organization of the school's program and with the purposes and methods for instruction and evaluation. Obviously, all such information does not appear

in documents labeled "curriculum." Some may appear in school board minutes, in administrative memos, and in diverse other forms. To a large extent, however, we are discussing those documents labeled "curriculum"—general statements or plans for the school and curriculum guides or courses of study, plus any supplemental material. Evaluation materials that might be considered part of the formal plans, particularly those which pertain to comprehensive testing programs, are also included in this definition.

The plans and materials to be analyzed may have been developed internally or externally. The increasing development of curriculum plans by agencies outside the school system underlines the need for systematic study of curriculum documents. Such plans require just as careful review by a school faculty considering their adoption as do plans developed internally.

One final point regarding the task is that a curriculum document is a tool of communication—a report of the decisions and suggestions of a planning group. If each member of a school staff could participate at every stage of the planning related to his work, the meaning conveyed by the written plans per se would perhaps not be of great importance. But such complete participation is seldom possible because of staff turnover, organizational complexity, and insufficient time. As a means of communication to those who have not participated in the planning, curriculum documents should be analyzed for what they actually say, apart from the unwritten intentions and interpretations of the planning group. (This kind of objectivity is an elusive quality in analyzing curriculum documents, particularly if the analysis is done by those who wrote the documents.) An independent, objective analysis should be useful feedback to the planning group and should provide direction for in-service education related to use of the document.

DESCRIPTIVE OR EVALUATIVE EMPHASIS

In the analysis of curriculum plans, it is helpful to recognize the distinction between descriptive and evaluative purposes. The intent may be to *describe* the content and general nature of the existing plans without a particular predetermined standard of what they should be. The intent may also be to *evaluate* the plans by comparison with some standard such as a selected model or set of criteria.*

*It is important to note the difference between evaluating curriculum plans by applying selected criteria and evaluating them by measuring their effects on student achievement. The former is our concern here, but, obviously, the latter is ultimately the critical determiner.

The distinction between the descriptive and evaluative purposes helps to clarify some of the problems in curriculum assessment.

Description and evaluation are not completely independent processes. The evaluative approach necessarily includes certain descriptive steps. Conversely, the descriptive steps cannot be taken without some evaluation of the material. The choice is one of intent or emphasis and depends on whether there is a conscious determination of the criteria for judging the plans prior to analyzing them.

The results of descriptive analysis could be used in various ways. For example, they might be compared with teachers' comments about the usefulness of different aspects of the plan as a guide for instruction. The results may simply serve as the basis for discussion of needed changes. The descriptive analysis itself may lead to the establishment of standards for future curriculum development. In many situations, however, some combination of the descriptive and evaluative approaches is preferable.

No attempt is made in this paper to establish the criteria for evaluating curriculum plans. Our position is that no single set of criteria is acceptable in all situations. Various proposals, in the form of "models," "theories," and "rationales," are available to guide the curriculum planning process. The acceptance of some one or more of these conceptual views rests largely on belief, and beliefs vary. There is lack of agreement within the field of curriculum on the rationales or models for curriculum development. There are conflicting theories, particularly about the learning process, which have differing implications for curriculum plans. The school system must make its own choices among these views and may even choose to develop its own. Selected points of view about the learning process and about the curriculum planning process are the sources of criteria for evaluating curriculum plans.

The next two sections deal separately with the descriptive and the evaluative approaches. The section on descriptive analysis presents a series of guidelines, which is followed by the summary of one such analysis by way of example. The section on the evaluative approach is a discussion of sources of criteria for judging the quality of curriculum plans. The analysis of selected passages from a curriculum document completes the paper.

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

The guidelines are stated in the form of questions indicating the kinds of information to be obtained. Many of the questions were

drawn from the work of curriculum writers and were adapted for use in appraising documents. For descriptive analysis, it should be remembered that the posing of these questions is intended to suggest neither what the answers to the questions should be nor that any particular category of information should appear in the documents.

A simple two-dimensional form was used to develop the guideline questions. One dimension identifies the basic categories of information to be obtained, the other the planning levels. Within this structure an attempt has been made to identify relevant questions for analysis of curriculum plans.

The basic categories of information provide a way of classifying what is recorded in the curriculum documents. The three categories used are (a) decisions and recommendations, (b) justification for the decisions, and (c) the forms of presentation of decisions and recommendations.

Decisions and recommendations are the statements of purpose, organization, and method pertaining to instruction and evaluation. *Justification for the decisions* refers to those statements explaining why the planners made the choices they did (i.e., the theories, beliefs, or empirical data that influenced their decisions). *Form of presentation* refers to optional versus mandatory style and the inclusion or exclusion of specific options.

For the purposes of this paper, a simple distinction is made between general and specific planning levels. Primarily, the distinction is between (a) those plans which outline the general task for the school and place boundaries on the teacher's responsibility and (b) those plans which suggest specifically how the teacher is to do his job. For the purpose of deriving questions for descriptive analysis, this is the practical point of distinction. Following is a discussion of the guideline questions for the general and specific planning levels.

General Level of Planning

The guideline questions for the types of decisions at the general level of planning are –

1. What is the plan of curriculum organization in terms of major divisions, departments, courses, grades, etc.? Are there descriptions of courses or of the various divisions of the curriculum?
2. Is there a statement of goals?
3. Is there a statement of belief about learning or the learning environment or about the practice of instruction intended to apply to all phases of the program?

4. Is there a general plan for evaluation of students? (e.g., an examination system, a standardized testing plan, or other procedures applying to all students)

These types of decisions are commonly found in the plans for a school or a school system.

The second category of information pertains to the justification of decisions given. Guideline questions parallel the types of decisions suggested above.

1. Is there any explanation of why the general plan of organization was developed as it was? What was the basis for the division and the sequence of curriculum areas?
2. Is justification given for the choice of goals? (i.e., philosophy, beliefs, or empirical evidence)
3. Is there any defense of statements about learning or instruction in terms of theory or empirical evidence?
4. Is there an explanation of the decisions about evaluation, either in point of view or in defense of the choice of procedures?

The authors of curriculum documents may not feel the need to write out the justifications for all of the many decisions they make. It is doubtful that any curriculum planning group would ever attempt to justify all its decisions in writing; the bulk of material produced might be more than anyone would care to read or need to read. The problem is simply to determine what, if any, justification has been given in writing. Whether it should be given depends on many specific factors including the perceptions and qualifications of the people involved as well as the relationships between the planning group and those who are to use the plan.

The third category of information is the form in which decisions are presented. These questions are perhaps more useful when applied to specific plans such as curriculum guides, but they can be considered at the more general level. Guideline questions are these—

1. Are the various types of decisions in the documents presented as directives or as suggestions?
2. If they are in the form of suggestions, are options given?
3. If options are given, is there any indication as to the circumstances in which a particular option is preferable?

Decisions made at the general planning level are not often treated as suggestions in the sense of being optional for teachers. Of the general-level decisions discussed in the preceding paragraphs, possibly the type most likely to be presented with suggestions and alter-

natives is that of evaluation. Certain broad statements about the practice of instruction may also be presented as suggestions rather than directives. Decisions about curriculum organization, however, are not likely to be offered as suggestions; one can imagine the state of chaos which would ensue if they were treated as such.

At this point it should be repeated that the topic of this paper is the analysis of written plans for the curriculum and not the study of the effect those plans have on people in the school. A statement beginning with "The school goals are . . ." is not presented as a suggestion or as a matter allowing teacher options. Whether it is treated as a directive (or simply ignored) by teachers is a problem for another phase of appraisal. The importance of the information category concerned with directives, suggestions, and alternatives is that it provides one of the critical dimensions for subsequent study of the relationship between formal and informal planning for curriculum.

Specific Level of Planning

The nature of formal documents or plans for specific courses, units, and daily activities of instruction reflects certain points of view about the kind of direction and guidance that teachers need. Study of various curriculum documents reveals that curriculum planners differ considerably in what they think should be written to guide the process of instruction. Variations occur on every dimension. Some planners seem to be chiefly concerned with the organization of the subject matter, some put their emphasis on the choice of materials, and others focus on the descriptions of teacher and student activities. Some stress the suggestive approach ("The teacher might. . . .") and some the directive approach ("The teacher must. . . ."). Some attempt to explain their decisions, and others seem to expect their decisions to be accepted without explanation. And, of course, there is wide variation in the degree of specificity of the plans.

Again, the three basic information categories were used to derive guideline questions for analysis, this time selecting those questions which seemed most appropriate for the more specific documents such as curriculum guides and course plans. The questions themselves are more detailed, and greater emphasis is placed on the level of specificity of the plans. The questions pertaining to specificity are particularly relevant if one is concerned with the respective decision-making roles of curriculum planners and teachers.

Guideline questions for describing the types of decisions included in the plans are given below. The word *plan* must be interpreted in

respect to the given situation; the plan for a particular course or curriculum area under consideration may appear in one or several documents. Selected questions are –

1. Does the plan provide the outline for organization and sequence of the course or curriculum area?
2. How specific is the treatment of subject matter? (unit topics, daily topics, specific examples, etc.)
3. Does the plan include specific activities for students? If so, are the activities described in sufficient detail to suggest what the student is actually to do and the related cognitive process? What is the general emphasis in types of activities described?
4. Does the plan give specific activities or methods for teachers? What is the general emphasis in types of activities?
5. Does the plan specify the materials to be used in instruction? Are there descriptions of what is to be done with the materials?
6. Are there any explicit statements about the nature of learning and the conditions under which it occurs? (e.g., statements about motivation, learning environment, maturation and capacity, cognitive processes)
7. Are there any explicit views on the structure of the subject matter? Are the criteria for selecting and organizing subject matter and materials given?
8. Is there a statement of objectives or desired results of instruction? To what degree of specificity have these been developed? (course, unit, or activity)
9. What are the suggested purposes for evaluating students? What evaluation methods are recommended? Are the specific procedures given? Is there a proposed schedule for evaluation? What suggestions are provided for the analysis and the use of the results of evaluation?

Most of these questions can be answered in the affirmative or negative or by simply noting what has been included in the plan. The answers to some questions may, in certain cases, be found at the general rather than the specific level of planning. For example, the response to question 6 might be found in the general plans for the school system rather than in a specific guide for a particular curriculum area.

Experience indicates that the most difficult questions to apply to a given set of plans are those listed under number 3 above—activities of students. We have not been able to develop a suitable set of definitive categories for types of activities and related cognitive processes

that can be adjusted to the peculiarities of language and style of different curriculum plans. In most instances, however, a classification derived from study of the specific documents emerges during the appraisal.

A further word is needed about variations in language. Any group undertaking the analysis of curriculum documents must come to some agreement about the definition of certain terms and then compare these definitions with the ones used in the documents to be studied. For instance, in one document, statements we would call objectives appeared under the label of activities, and statements we would call activities (e.g., "bring a picture to class") were labeled objectives. The information one is seeking may be there, but the terms used in the guideline questions do not always match the labels in the document being studied.

For each of the types of decisions suggested by the foregoing list of questions, the presence or absence of justification can be ascertained simply by noting whether or not the planners included reasons for their decisions. These reasons may be expressed as theoretical views of the learning process or the subject matter or as evidence from empirical research. At the specific level of planning, the source of justification may sometimes be an official statement or policy of the school system.

The final step in the general procedure for descriptive analysis is to determine the form in which the decisions are presented. Guideline questions are the same as those listed at the general level of planning.

1. Are the various types of decisions in the documents presented as directives or as suggestions?
2. If they are in the form of suggestions, are options given?
3. If options are given, is there any indication as to the circumstances in which a particular option is preferable?

Again, it is possible that in these questions lies a key to more effective relations between the formal and informal curriculum planning processes. The manner of presentation may have much to do with teachers' perceptions of curriculum plans and, consequently, their willingness to use them. Therefore this step, applied to curriculum guides and other specific documents, is considered to be one of the most important in descriptive analysis.

Consistency and Clarity

Two evaluative criteria are inescapable in the descriptive analysis of curriculum documents—clarity of meaning and internal consis-

tency. In general, internal consistency is determined by comparing the results of the various steps in descriptive analysis. One form of comparison is between the general and specific planning levels. If, for example, the general plans for the school system include a statement of belief about the learning process, one would look to see if this is reflected in the more specific documents. Another form of comparison is between stated objectives and the related activities and evaluation procedures for a unit or course. A complete check on internal consistency would compare information on all parts of the total set of documents being studied.

The criterion of clarity, however, is primary. The longer one works on the analysis of curriculum plans, the more apparent it is that too many planning groups fail to consider this criterion. The most common problem is the lack of definition and consistent use of key terms pertaining to the learning process and to educational objectives. Without precise clarification of terms, it is often not possible to know what decisions have been made, much less to judge the internal consistency of the plans.

An Example

A brief summary of the analysis of one curriculum guide will conclude this section on descriptive analysis. The document selected is a ninth-grade social studies guide not unlike many other documents of the same type. The introductory section gives a statement of philosophy, the course objectives, and a point of view about the structure of the social studies curriculum. The remainder of the document consists of a series of unit plans giving activities, materials, and evaluation procedures. On first reading, the most unusual thing about this guide is that it contains more than the usual number of admonitions to teachers about their attitudes and methods.

Classification of teacher and student activities in this case was not too difficult because there is much repetition. Students are to be given three or four specific examples, usually in written passages, intended to illustrate the "concept" for the unit. Through group discussion led by the teacher, students are to arrive at or "discover" the given concept. The sequence of questions to be asked by the teacher in the class discussion is given for several of the units, but not for all.

This social studies guide demonstrates very well the problems encountered when certain terms appear to be important but are not defined. The type of student-teacher activity described above (i.e., discussing given examples in order to arrive at a given concept) is the one most commonly used in the guide, and it was obviously felt

to be the best way for students to master the concepts. The mental process involved in this type of activity is variously referred to as "critical thought process," "reflective thinking," "understanding," "hypothesizing," "hypothesis testing," "ability to differentiate," "classification of thought," and "discovery." Most of these terms are also used in reference to other types of activities as well; the guide is liberally sprinkled with them. Instead of clarifying their meaning, the authors of the guide were apparently trying to drive home a point by introducing more and more undefined terms. One cannot help but wonder if the indiscriminate use of so many terms serves to accomplish anything but to confuse the situation for the users of the guide.

The writers of this curriculum document were remarkably consistent in one respect—the form of presentation of their decisions. Decisions about the selection of concepts and general arrangement of units are presented in a firmly directive manner. This is also true of the decisions about basic instructional methods and the procedures and schedule for evaluation. There is extensive use of the word must in reference to both teacher and student behavior. In contrast, specific illustrative materials listed for the various units are generally presented in the form of suggestions, with the indication that the teacher might select other examples. The forms of expression in this guide suggest strong feelings that the purposes, organization, and methods of instruction and evaluation are not decisions that should be optional for the individual teacher. The one type of decision consistently presented as optional is that of the choice of specific illustrative materials. Attitudes of the curriculum planners about their own and the individual teacher's roles in decision making are clear in this case.

An attempt to determine consistency among the several types of decisions was not very successful. Comparisons between decisions about objectives and decisions about activities could not be made because of obscure meanings of words. One of the course objectives, for example, reads "To show the inter-relationship of structure and the reflective method." One can sometimes elucidate the meaning of an objective by comparing its key terms with terms used in the rest of the document to describe activities. The profusion and confusion of terms as described above made this impossible. A similar problem occurred in trying to compare objectives and evaluation procedures. This simply illustrates that without clarification of key terms, consistency among the various types of decisions cannot be considered.

Despite these criticisms, this social studies curriculum guide is probably better than most in many respects. It is obvious that much effort has been given to selection of concepts and organization of subject matter. The guide is clear and detailed in the directions for instructional and evaluation methods.

The example cited reflects a situation in which curriculum planning has progressed to a stage where rather complete appraisal of existing plans is warranted. In contrast, there are situations where curriculum plans are so obviously poor or incomplete that detailed analysis would be a waste of time and only limited appraisal is needed. The extent of detailed analysis and the time devoted to it should depend, to a degree, on the current stage of curriculum development.

EVALUATIVE ANALYSIS

Evaluation of curriculum plans, apart from empirical testing, can be based on a model, rationale, theory, or simply some homemade belief. Criteria which form the evaluative standards may be drawn from a variety of sources and selected for a variety of reasons. Three possible sources of criteria are discussed here.

First, criteria might be adopted or selected from a view of curriculum planning as an organizational process. This view should indicate the roles of various people or positions in curriculum decision making. The criteria would be a basis for judging the extent and nature of the task of formal planning. In many schools there seems to be little conscious effort to establish criteria of this kind.

The development of a statement or point of view about the organizational process requires consideration of some basic questions.

1. Of the various types of curriculum decisions (goals, objectives, activities, materials), which should be mandatory and which optional for the teacher? For example, should each individual teacher have the option of selecting the objectives for instruction?
2. What is the purpose of formal planning in the institution? Is it to tell the teacher how to do his job or simply to outline his broad responsibilities? Is it to coordinate and control the total program? Is it to provide support and help for teachers?
3. What should the approval process be in terms of types of decisions, documents, and the like? What should appear in formally approved documents?

4. Should formal plans be based on specific points of view about learning or instruction? If so, does this necessitate the assumption that everyone who participates in the development and implementation of the plans must agree with or conform to this belief?
5. Should formal planning be based on the assumption that the planners, if judiciously selected, will make rational decisions and therefore need not justify their decisions?

This list of questions is incomplete, but it does suggest some of the more important points to consider in deciding what the products of the formal planning process should be. Answers to these questions provide one base for analyzing existing plans and determining needed changes.

A second source of criteria for judging the formal curriculum plans is a theory or point of view about learning and instruction. An example is a theoretical position on the stages of cognitive development. If such a position is adopted, it then becomes a source of criteria for judging the objectives, activities, and other decisions that appear in the curriculum plans. The selection of some theoretical view of the structure of subject matter might also provide a principal source of criteria for making judgments. Perhaps a more common example is the school system which adopts a point of view such as "individualization of instruction" as a kind of guiding philosophy for the total system. In this case an important source of criteria for judging the curriculum plans lies in the meaning which is given to the term individualization and the practices which have been suggested to achieve it. Generally, the source of criteria from a theoretical or conceptual view does not exclude other sources, but it may represent the institution's predominant beliefs.

A third source of criteria is that of models or rationales which identify the types of curricular decisions, the relationships among these decisions, and the bases on which decisions should be made. These proposals for the process of curriculum development are based on some view of rational decision making. They do not prescribe instructional practice (as the theoretical view may do), but they do indicate a decision-making process for a planning group to follow.

Criteria to be derived from the decision-making rationales are those suggested above – the kinds of decisions which should be included in curriculum planning, the bases for making these decisions, and the relationships among decisions. The rationales generally sug-

gest that goals and objectives should be stated explicitly, that objectives should identify desired behavioral outcomes, and that the plans for activities and evaluation should be consistent with the objectives. Certain elements of various rationales are similar, but differences are found in the criteria suggested for decision making and in the treatment of the specificity with which decisions are to be made. Although the rationales do not as a rule indicate how much or what kind of decision making should be included in formal planning as opposed to informal planning, they do provide one source of criteria for judging plans.

To a degree, the choice or use of a decision-making rationale in the appraisal process depends on the stage of curriculum planning in a particular school system or organization. A highly complex rationale may not be useful if planning has been limited and has not been guided by the use of such a rationale. Selecting particular parts, such as the relationship between activities and objectives, may be the extent to which the rationale is useful in the appraisal of existing documents.

This brief treatment of the subject of evaluation by the development or adoption of criteria is not comprehensive, but a point of view has been presented and some basic approaches have been suggested. Others who have engaged in this complex process will recognize that these general statements do not begin to identify the detailed problems which arise during the course of analyzing curriculum documents.

In the aspect of Project MACSI that was concerned with methods of curriculum assessment, a neutral stance was maintained on the choice of evaluative criteria and the sources from which they are drawn. Selection of a theory, a rationale, or other conceptual view to guide the curriculum process cannot be made by anyone outside the school system. This should be a conscious, deliberate choice by the total school faculty. It is our purpose to identify some of the various choices that might be made and to indicate the principal dimensions on which curriculum plans can be judged.

CONCLUSION

Curriculum plans are only one of the many forms of printed materials with which the teacher is often confronted. To the extent that he is free to choose, the teacher will select material which truly helps him in his work and which offers an instructional approach he understands and accepts. Poorly constructed or incomprehensible cur-

riculum plans will not be given very much attention. On the other hand, if the teacher is not free to choose, he may be forced to conduct instruction, at least superficially, in a manner with which he does not agree or perhaps does not understand. The forced use of inadequate or inferior curriculum plans is not likely to improve instruction in any real sense. Effective curriculum planning requires that the quality of its products be high, and that the teachers perceive this quality.

From the institution's point of view, curriculum planning is the one aspect of organizational planning which deals most directly with that service the school is established to offer—instruction. The only justification for expending resources on curriculum planning is that it will have a favorable influence on the type and quality of service rendered. Written documents comprising the curriculum plans are a connecting link between formal organizational planning and the practice of teaching. The nature and quality of those plans have a great deal to do with the strength of the connection.

The theme of this paper is that the study of curriculum plans is one way to move toward greater effectiveness in curriculum planning. The attitude suggested is not "let's throw everything out and start over," but rather "let's look at what we have and build from our strength." The analysis of curriculum documents is not a starting point or an ending point, but a developmental step in planning. For many school systems, whose plans for curriculum are neither perfect nor deplorable, it is hoped that the approach described here will be useful.

Application: Analysis of a Sample Document

The following section is an illustration of the analysis of selected passages from another curriculum document. The material to be analyzed, the "Study Guide" which appears on the following pages, was provided by another member of the Project staff, and the analysis was done by the author. The report of the analysis begins on page 31, following passages from the Study Guide.

Analysis of such limited material is probably not an accurate reflection of the results one would obtain from study of a more complete set of plans. In the absence of further information about the situation, an attempt was made, however, to do a detailed report on this material. The Study Guide material on the following pages represents the total amount of material presented for analysis and appears exactly as it was given to the author. Thus, the reader has at his disposal the same information as did the author.

The Study Guide material is in three sections – A, B, and C. Part A contains a list of paired generalizations and objectives, which are numbered for ease of reference. Parts B and C are the plans designed for two of the objectives given in Part A.

[PART A]

STUDY GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

Political Education for Fifth Grade To Be Included in the Study of United States History

This unit is designed to be a required part of the study of United States history for fifth-grade children. Although the broad unit is mandatory, there should be many opportunities to extend, amplify, modify and adapt the specific suggestions contained in this document according to the individual differences in the class. The Department of Curriculum and Supervision will welcome any suggestions for revision of this document, in whole or in part, and a form for communicating suggestions to the Department is included in this packet of materials.

The following generalizations have been used to substantiate the need for a program of political education and to provide valid bases for the formulation of objectives, learning opportunities, and evaluative devices.

	Generalization	Objective
[1]	There is an integral connection between the child's feelings toward the primary environment and later responses to individuals in the secondary environment.	To evaluate critically the roles of family members
[2]	Structure of cognitive information is erected on a foundation of feelings, assessments and opinions. Within the span of grade four to grade eight information increases markedly.	To discriminate between feelings and cognitive information

Generalization	Objective
[3] The experiences by which a child learns about the political world have a sustained and pervasive influence on his subsequent politcal behavior.	To participate politically whenever opportunities present themselves
[4] The child's images of political authority arise from the psychological needs of the child as well as the definitions of authority that come from his experience.	To define clearly, in relation to their roles, figures of authority in the environment
[5] Elected figures may serve as orienting figures for children.	To identify major elected officials
[6] Children often subordinate the roles of the legislative and judicial branches of the government, possibly due to cognitive dynamics.	To understand the relationships existing between the branches of government
[7] Attitudes become modified by learning experiences of various kinds.	To appreciate the contributions of the democratic order to present-day society
[8] The child has a repertoire of attitudes toward authority figures which can be brought into play by cues in the environment or by the presentation of objects toward which certain attitudes are appropriate.	To reconcile feelings and attitudes with those of confronted authority figures
[9] There is evidence of voter apathy in the 21-29 year old age group. Elections on a local scene seldom garner more than 55% of the qualified votes.	To participate in voting activities when they present themselves
[10] Evidence indicates that the inability to withstand the propaganda contributed to the defectors in the Korean conflict.	To develop a commitment to democracy as a political system
[11] The large body of citizens does not distinguish between feelings and cognitive information about political structure.	To evaluate political events in the light of cognitive information

Generalization	Objective
[12] Political scientists state that there is a significant percentage of high school graduates who are unprepared for citizenship.	To view the individual as an integral and significant part of the political structure of a democracy
[13] American politics evidences a current struggle for dominance between civil and states' rights.	To understand the constitutional differences between states' and civil rights
[14] The role of the Supreme Court in modern political activities is misunderstood or disapproved by many citizens.	To interpret the actions of the governmental bodies in light of the constitutional framework
[15] Large numbers of the population are unaware of the identity of their elected representatives in Congress.	To communicate directly with elected representatives
[16] From philosophy and religion has come the idea that man has an inalienable right to life, liberty, property and the 'pursuit of happiness' - Locke indicated that the individual is centrally important and government is the means by which his rights are protected, not an end in itself.	To develop a concept of time and place in the evolution of democratic political values
[17] Philosophical principles of human worth and dignity have been translated into public law and civil policy.	To understand the importance of historical documents regarded as significant in the development of democracy
[18] The American Bill of Rights protects the individual from violation of those rights by others. (Freedom of speech, press, worship, from arbitrary arrest, right to protect property, free assembly, petition, bear arms, speedy, fair and public trial.)	To discriminate between (legally) fair and unfair treatment of individuals

Generalization	Objective
[19] Maintenance of these rights is the responsibility of federal and state governments.	To accept the workings of the state and federal governments related to the protection of the rights of individuals
[20] A stable democracy requires situations in which all major political parties include supporters from every segment of the population.	To understand the role of universal suffrage in the democratic society
[21] Non-voters are more likely than voters to oppose democratic values.	To participate in decision-making accepted as democratic in nature
[22] People in groups need rules or laws to insure peaceful lives and protection of individuals. It is the responsibility of each person to know the laws and obey them, since, in a democracy each person helps to make the laws.	To practice the complete act of contributing to laws and living with them in a democratic manner
[23] Individuals find the best opportunities to influence social policy through cooperative efforts with like-minded individuals.	To develop commitments and allegiances to political ideals held by citizen groups

[Two objectives have been selected from this listing for Parts B and C, which follow.]

[PART B]

Objectives, Learning Opportunities, Evaluation

Objective: To participate in decision-making accepted as being democratic in nature

The act of decision-making, when thought of in its best sense, implies rational thinking. For this behavior it is necessary for the individual to entertain possibility of alternatives and if-then thinking. It is a period of formal thought in the development of the child and is differentiated from earlier developmental stages characterized by direct relating to concrete experience with little predictive operation.

Piaget, in his theories of mental development, suggests that the child goes through several predictable periods of cognitive development. Simplified, the theory lists the following: the sensory-motor stage, the preoperational stage, the stage of concrete operations, and, the stage of formal thought. Related to the above stated objective, we are interested in the last stage; the stage of formal thought.

The development in reasoning, according to Piaget, occurs at about eleven years of age. The child does more of his thinking in abstract terms -- he states propositions and he can perform operations upon the propositions either by combining them or transforming them. Thus he will say, 'If this happens, then that is also likely to happen'; or, 'If this is true, then that can't possibly be true'; or 'Both things can be true'; or "Neither one is true. '

At the formal stage of development he can see the relationship between results and the question to be answered and state that relationship as a proposition. This is not a shift in thinking from earlier stages but rather a gradual evolvement from simpler to more complex and more sophisticated cognitive actions.

Learning Opportunities

- decide, with others, the destination of a class field trip related to an area of study
- solve, with others, problems related to classroom management
- act as a member of a student council
- choose, with others, significant and appropriate aspects of a class study to share at open house or during a culmination
- solve, with others, problems of a content or intellectual nature

Evaluative Procedures

- observe and record the level of participation regularly during the school year
- note evidence of resistance to decisions based on undemocratic procedures
- note choices when students are offered alternative measures for solving problems and making decisions
- interview teachers in successive years to ascertain consistency of behavior
- compare behavior in decision-making at the end of the year with that of the beginning of year

[PART C]

Objective: To develop a concept of time and place in the evolution of democratic political values

The prime factor, from an instructional view, related to this objective is the conjunction of language and thought. Language plays an important part in concept formation. Once the verbal label for the concept has been acquired there should be little difficulty in making correct responses. There must be distinction, however, between simple labeling and accurate application of concept.

The 'quantities' of time and space are difficult for very young children to understand. Related to other quantities, Piaget discovered that they enter the realm of understanding during the formal stage of thought in his developmental theories. In studies by Elkind, Inhelder, Laurendeau, and, of course, Piaget it has been found that the eleven and twelve year old child can deal with time and place if there has been correlated language development to facilitate understanding of the concepts.

Learning Opportunities

- discover, through research, the dominant political values
- see the film, 'For the People'
- design and execute a timeline illustrating those political events leading to the foundation of dominant political values - this would be a continuous activity
- graph, mathematically, the evolution of dominant democratic political values

- indicate on a map the origin of the values as observable aspects of political socialization

- write and perform a play illustrating the evolution of democratic political values with emphasis on the idea of 'then to now'

Evaluative Procedures

- sample timelines, graphs and written material produced during the year

- interview students with express purpose of determining if concept has been internalized

- observe students using a world map to illustrate to classmates origins of values

- discuss with students sequence of events leading to acceptance of values - note conclusions

- offer students the opportunity to make a set of cards indicating major events leading to development of values - ask students to place them in chronological order - note behavior

THE ANALYSIS

There is no reference in the Study Guide material to the more general-level plans and decisions, except that political education is somehow included in U. S. history, as either part of or all of U. S. history for the fifth grade. The more general structure in which this unit fits is not given, either for history or political education. The inclusion of political education is probably mandatory, but it is not clear whether the "broad unit," described as mandatory, refers to this specific unit or to some broader segment of content.

The sequence of planning decisions appears to be as follows: identify generalizations; for each generalization identify one objective; for each objective list learning opportunities and evaluative procedures. Beyond the point of identifying objectives, plans are developed independently per objective.

There is no evidence of what the total time commitment might be for this unit or how it might be fitted in with activities in other curriculum areas. There is no indication of what the rest of U. S. history for the fifth grade might be, if this unit is only part of it.

Descriptive Analysis

I. Decisions and Recommendations

1. *Does the plan provide the outline for organization and sequence of the course or curriculum area?*
   The passages do not make it clear what the organization and sequence are. That is, there is no indication of whether the objectives and related learning opportunities are to be treated in the order listed or whether there is any necessary sequence. For example, one might raise the question of whether it is necessary to achieve the first objective ("To evaluate critically the roles of family members") prior to the second ("To discriminate between feelings and cognitive information"). There is no apparent sequence in these two objectives or in the remainder of the list. The evaluative procedures in Parts B and C suggest that the activities for any given objective may be carried on throughout the year. In general, while there is some indication of the selection of subject matter, the organization and sequence are not given, nor are there any suggested criteria by which the teacher is to make these decisions.
2. *How specific is the treatment of subject matter? (unit topics, daily topics, specific examples, etc.)*
   The only treatment of subject matter for the whole unit is that which appears in the objectives, and the specificity varies

considerably. For example, "To participate politically whenever opportunities present themselves" is quite different, in terms of specific delineation of subject matter, from "To understand the relationships existing between the branches of government" or "To identify major elected officials." The two sets of learning opportunities provided (Parts B and C) suggest that possibly for some objectives the subject matter is identified for the particular activities; for others, the emphasis is on types of activities with little or no specification of subject matter. The only example we have where subject matter is clearly indicated does not outline the subject matter in detail; i.e., "the dominant political values" are not identified; the "political events leading to the foundation of dominant political values" are not listed; the geographic "origin of the values" is not further specified.

3. Does the plan include specific activities for students? If so, are the activities described in sufficient detail to suggest what the student is actually to do and the related cognitive process? What is the general emphasis in types of activities described?

The plan does include activities or "learning opportunities" for students. Most of these are fairly specific as to what the student is to do: see a film, design and execute a timeline, participate in group decision making. In each example given (Parts B and C), a discussion of related mental process or capacity precedes the learning opportunities.

Part B. All activities for this objective are of the same general type, to participate in group decisions of various sorts. The introductory discussion states a view of the decision process that the child at about 11 years is able to perform. Presumably the decision situations are to be designed to allow the student to express the rational thought patterns indicated. That is, the discussion indicates what the student in this age group can do; we cannot say that it *will* occur in the activities as they are described. It may be further noted that group decision making is not necessarily "democratic in nature"; involvement as a member of a democratic process is not discussed. A more specific treatment of the learning opportunities might identify stages of the decision process for the group that would tend to elicit the particular mental operations indicated in the discussion, or describe more specifically the decision situations.

Part C. In this case the activities are of various types and, with the exception of the first, are specific as to what the student is

to do. It is not clear what combination of these activities is necessary to the process of concept learning. The last four all appear to be ways of organizing and applying information related to the stated concept. No classification can be made of mental process involved in the first two learning opportunities listed. "Discover, through research" cannot be classified without knowing what the "research" process is. "See the film" is a purely passive occupation, and one would have to know what the student is to do with what he learns from the film.

The discussion which precedes the learning opportunities stresses the importance of language development related to acquiring a concept of time and space; the child con acquire the concept, and apply it, if appropriate language development occurs. The language necessary to the given concept is unspecified. The implication is that if the child goes through some one or more of the activities the result will be the necessary language development and concept learning.

4. *Does the plon give specific octivities or methods for teochers? Whot is the generol emphosis in types of octivities?*

   Activities or methods for teachers are not given explicitly, except for the evaluation procedures which are apparently addressed to the teacher. The plan might have included, for example, ways for the teacher to set the stage for democratic decision making or suggestions for presenting the film.

5. *Are the moteriols to be used in instruction noted? Are there descriptions of whot is to be done with the moteriols?*

   It is difficult to say with the examples given. No specific reading materials are identified. The only two items given are a film, specified by title, and a map. This may be because of the particular parts of the total plan selected for this analysis, or it may reflect an opinion that materials should be selected by students and teachers without suggestions from the planning group.

6. *Are there ony explicit stotements obout the noture of leorning ond the conditions under which it occurs? (e.g., stotements obout motivotion, leorning environment, moturotion ond capocity, cognitive processes)*

   Yes, but these are not organized in this material as a single guiding view of the learning process. Some isolated statements of this nature appear in the generalizations. (See, in particular, generalizations 2 and 7.) The introductory discussions for the two objectives in Parts B and C both refer to Piaget's theory of

cognitive development, but there is no indication that this was a basis for planning the total unit. His view deals with maturation and capacity in relation to cognitive development.

7. *Are there any explicit views on the structure of the subject motter? Are the criterio for selecting ond orgonizing subject motter and materiols given?*
   This question pertains to a broader view of political education, history, or perhaps social studies that would guide decisions about any particular unit within the broad area. Such a view would indicate how the generalizations which define this unit fit into a broader scheme. No such view is expressed in the unit plan nor, as indicated earlier, are there any criteria given for the selection and organization of subject matter. If there is an operating criterion in the planning process, it is that the generalizations are the source of objectives, which in turn determine subject matter. There are no criteria stated for the selection of generalizations.
8. *Is there ony statement of objectives or desired results of instruction? To whot degree of specificity hove these been developed? (course, unit, or octivity)*
   Objectives for the "unit" are given, but these are not all at the same level of specificity. For example, "To identify major elected officials" seems far more specific than "To practice the complete act of contributing to laws and living with them in a democratic manner." The unit plan has 23 objectives, some of which may contribute to others, but these relationships are not discussed.
9. *Whot ore the suggested purposes for evoluoting students? Whot evoluotion methods ore recommended? Are the specific procedures given? Is there o proposed schedule for evoluotion? Whot suggestions ore provided concerning the onolysis ond use of the results of evoluotion?*
   There are no stated purposes for evaluation; the one suggested procedure which includes the word purpose refers to the type of information desired, not the use to which it will be put. In Part B, the principal method is observation of student behavior in the decision-making situation. One method, interviewing teachers in subsequent years, indicates concern for the permanence of change effected by the learning opportunities. In Part C, which is more content oriented, the evaluation of materials produced by the student is a principal method. Verbal interaction between teacher and student as a means of evalua-

tion is stressed here more than observation, the latter being limited to one specifically defined situation.

The instructions about evaluative procedures are not very specific. No test instruments, interview outlines, or observational records are included, nor are there any particular suggestions for criteria to use in the development of such procedures. Where specific content is involved, the evaluation is apparently to depend, in part at least, on correctness in the application of knowledge (e.g., "sample timelines, graphs and written material . . .," "observe students using a world map . . ."), and suggestions of this type might be clear instructions to the teacher. In contrast are suggestions pertaining to observation of more complex behaviors where the nature of what is to be recorded is not clear. To "observe and record the level of participation regularly during the school year" clarifies neither whether "level" refers to frequency or quality nor what the behavioral indicators are. A student who talks a lot in any discussion is not necessarily contributing in a democratic way to a democratic process. It is left to the teacher to determine the specific criteria for evaluation. The suggestion "interview teachers in successive years to ascertain consistency of behavior" leaves the same questions about procedure unanswered.

Most of the procedures for evaluation are to be used through the year or whenever the activity occurs. One suggested method specifies comparison between the beginning-of-the-year and end-of-the-year behavior. One specifies successive years. The general emphasis, however, is on applying evaluation methods when appropriate as opposed to a calendar schedule.

There are no suggestions for the analysis and use of the results of evaluation.

II. *Reasons and Justification for the Decisions*

The major form of justification that appears is the list of generalizations, which is supposed to justify the total unit as well as the choice of objectives. No justification is given for the choice of the generalizations themselves. One suspects the writer of the document was trying to draw generalizations from learning theory, philosophy, the subject matter, knowledge of societal needs, and knowledge of the learner, but this is not so specified. (The use of these sources for generalizations leading to separate objectives is an unusual approach.) There is no statement of justification by reference to more general-level decisions within the curriculum area or school system, such as

an accepted view on learning theory, philosophy, or general structure of the subject matter.

Space does not permit going into all the questions that might be raised about the generalizations as justification for the objectives. Most if not all of the generalizations could lead to objectives other than the ones selected. Some of the objectives could be justified by more than one generalization. In some cases one wonders why the particular generalization-objective match was made. (See, for example, the generalization used to justify the objective "To develop a commitment to democracy as a political system.")

It is important to note that what a curriculum writer offers as justification for a decision may not always be acceptable as such. If, as it appears, each generalization is intended as the justification for the objective which follows, then in some cases one must question the relationship. Perhaps the best example of this is found in generalization-objective pair number 7, where the generalization does not justify the objective. This is not to question either statement, only to question one as justification for the other.

A different sort of reason for the objectives is found in the introductory discussions in Parts B and C. Here there is justification of the choice of the objective for the particular age level by reference to a theoretical view of stages of cognitive development. It is not clear why this form of justification appears in the plan for each objective rather than as a guiding view for the unit.

III. The Forms *of* Presentotion

All one can tell concerning mandatory and optional forms of presentation is that something is "mandatory for teachers and learners." If the "broad unit" is defined by the generalizations for political education, then presumably the generalizations must be used to derive objectives. If it is defined by the generalizations plus the objectives, then the list of objectives must be used in planning activities for instruction and evaluation. The document is vague on whether the teacher must accept the objectives or the generalizations or may simply include something on political education of his own choosing in the fifth grade.

The list of learning opportunities appears to be for students and the evaluative procedures for teachers. There is an avoidance, probably by design, of statements beginning "The teacher . . ." or "The student. . . ." It would appear from the introductory

remarks that these lists are intended as suggestions, but the presence or absence of specific options cannot be determined. The writer of the document has not indicated whether all the types of learning opportunities listed are important to achieving the objective as stated or whether any combination is necessary or sufficient.

There is insufficient information to determine the writer's perception of roles in curriculum decision making.

IV. Consistency and Clarity

In regard to Parts B and C, there are no apparent inconsistencies among the objectives, learning opportunities, and evaluation procedures. Further definition of terms is needed before consistency, in the positive sense, can be determined. The major key terms that need definition are those appearing in the objectives, particularly the behavioral terms. Some definition is found in the discussion related to each objective but this is not complete. For example, in Part C it *is* still not clear what the process of developing a concept is. Some one or more of the learning opportunities might be used to define it, but again we do not know which ones are necessary types of experiences for concept learning.

The chief problem of consistency does not lie in any apparent discrepancy or conflict among the types of decisions but in the varying noture of the generalizations and their relationship to the objectives. The generalizations range from specific facts to basic democratic beliefs. (On reading them, one cannot help but wonder what a "generalization" is. The list reads more like a true-false test for student teachers.) They are different orders of statements with no consistent pattern, and they do not lead to correspondingly different orders of objectives.

The lack of criteria or any logical pattern in the choice of generalizations is made more evident by trying to classify the statements. If one basic democratic belief is stated as a "generalization," it might be expected that the others would be also. These statements would form one order or type of statement. There might be a second type of statement concerned with laws and governmental function related to each of the basic beliefs. A third type of statement might consist of facts suggesting inadequacies or flaws in the way the system works. Some statements of all three types do appear in the generalizations but in no consistent fashion. Compare, for example, generalizations 16 and 9. Number 16 is the only clear example of a statement of

basic democratic belief, and it is followed by three statements of the second type but none of the third type. (Yet the third type is certainly implied by objective 18.) Generalization number 9, in contrast, is a statement of the third type, but it is not preceded by corresponding statements of the first and second types. One must assume, for example, an underlying belief that democracy is government by the people and that effective democracy depends on participation of the people. If it was important to state the first belief, why not this one? There is no apparent reason for the particular choice of statements of these different types.

The objectives also appear to be of different orders, not only in specificity but in the nature of the statement. The pertinent distinctions are (a) ultimate and continuing behavioral practices considered desirable in a good citizen; (b) the knowledge, skills, and attitudes or commitments prerequisite to the desired behavioral practices; and (c) specific activities or experiences which contribute to the acquisition of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Which of these types of statements is labeled "objectives" depends on one's point of view; all three must be considered, implicitly or explicitly, in curriculum planning. The problem with the Study Guide under consideration is that there is no clear distinction among statements of these three types, and they are all labeled "objectives."

Evaluative Criteria

There are many specific examples of criteria that could be applied, but space and the limited Study Guide material greatly reduce the number that can be discussed in a meaningful way. Reference is made in the following paragraphs to sources for criteria, and a few selected criteria are discussed. Because the lists of objectives and generalizations are the most complete information given, the criteria selected for discussion pertain primarily to this aspect of planning.

The previous comments on consistency—or lack of it—in the Study Guide bring into consideration several potential sources of criteria for evaluation and improvement. One is an explicit view of the organization and purposes of political education that would provide justification for the content of the fifth-grade unit. Another is a selected position on the meaning and nature of objectives and the process by which they and the related activities are derived. A third is a more complete statement of views on the process of learn-

ing. Criteria drawn from these sources would enable judgments to be made about the decisions which appear in the guide and might further provide that thing which is totally lacking—a basis for determining sequence.

On the matter of objectives, one point of view which could be adopted from curriculum rationale is that objectives should be limited to a few highly important desired learnings, which are carefully selected after consulting various sources. In this view the various sources—the subject field, learning theory, philosophy, etc.—would not contribute separate objectives, but all would be considered in developing and screening the list of objectives. Thus, for example, generalization number 2 (which comes from a view of the learning process) and generalization number 11 would not contribute separate objectives of a similar nature, but would be considered together. As stated, objective number 2 appears to be a necessary process in the achievement of number 11, and they could be combined in a single statement. Further comparisons of this sort should clarify relationships and possibly reduce the list of objectives.

The more general criterion of efficiency in the development of objectives and activities might well be invoked in this situation. Why, for example, should objectives 3, 9, and 21 be three separate objectives to be treated independently in further planning? One may suppose that there would be considerable overlap in the three separate lists of activities related to these objectives. One could apply the further idea that the choice of *activities* should be made with the efficiency criterion in mind: Each activity should, where possible, contribute to more than one objective. The whole process by which the Study Guide was developed, with separate learning opportunities for each objective, appears to deny any consideration of a selected activity contributing to more than one objective. Efficiency, like sequence, seems to have been ignored.

A contrasting point of view on the development of objectives is one which holds that objectives should be stated so specifically as to determine in detail what the activities or learning opportunities are. In effect, an objective is a statement of a very specific activity, and the result of this approach is a much longer and more detailed list of "to do" statements. If this view were adopted, most of the objectives in the Study Guide would have to be broken down into a series of more detailed statements of what the student is to do and many would have to be altered completely. (Objectives 6, 7, 10, 12, and 19, for example, do not—in the present form and without definition—provide any direction for related activities.) A consistent

view of the nature and function of objectives is desirable if objectives are going to be specified at all.

A different type of criterion could be drawn from a selected view of decision-making roles in curriculum planning. For example, a faculty group might specify that curriculum planning should include determination of objectives for courses and units, and that it should provide optional sets of activities and materials. For the given Study Guide the application of these criteria would mean, at the very least, clarifying the directive and optional forms in the document and adding more suggestions for materials, in addition to specification of optional forms for learning opportunities. The latter would necessitate clarification of the meaning of the objectives.

As indicated earlier, there are many ways that curriculum plans can be evaluated, and there are many reasons why they might be—no one set of criteria is appropriate for all purposes. The primary purpose in one situation might be to bring the plans in line with a selected conceptual view of curriculum. In another situation the school may be launching a new program, such as computer-assisted instruction, and the purpose might be to determine whether sufficient direction for program selection and development can be obtained from existing plans. Or, perhaps a faculty group has been asked to report on the adequacy of existing plans for meeting the needs of the particular community. Whatever the purpose, the initial problem is to identify those relevant criteria that will determine the emphasis of the evaluation, recognizing that additional standards will emerge in the process.

In more general terms, the careful delineation of criteria for evaluating curriculum plans forces attention to an important question: What are the curriculum planning processes in the school system expected to produce? Too rarely is this question given the attention it deserves, in view of the resources that are commonly expended on the process.